

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
AT KNOXVILLE

Maurice L. Clark, Sr.,)
)
Petitioner,)
)
v.) Case No. 3:96-CR-61-PLR
)
State of Tennessee,)
)
Respondent.)

Memorandum Opinion and Order

This matter comes before the Court on Maurice L. Clark's *pro se* petition for the restoration of his full rights of citizenship under Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 40-29-101, *et seq.* In 1999, Mr. Clark was convicted in this Court of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine hydrochloride. Mr. Clark's supervised release expired on November 23, 2009, and he reports not having been convicted of a crime since. Mr. Clark also reports that he has been employed with Knoxville Area Transit since January 2009.

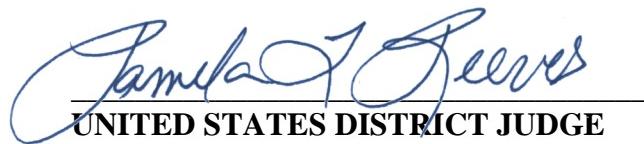
Under Tenn. Code Ann. § 40-29-101, *et seq.*, persons deprived of the rights of citizenship by the judgment of any state or federal court may have their full rights restored by the circuit court. To have one's rights restored, Tenn. Code Ann. § 40-29-102 provides as follows:

The proceeding for this purpose shall be by petition to the circuit court of the county in which the petitioner resides, or to the circuit court of the county in which the petitioner was convicted of an act depriving the petitioner of citizenship sustained by satisfactory proof that ever since the judgment of disqualification, the petitioner has sustained the character of a person of honesty, respectability and veracity, and is generally esteemed as such by the petitioner's neighbors.

Finally, before the petition can be heard, the district attorney general for each county in which the petitioner was convicted and now resides as well as the United States Attorney must be given notice and the opportunity to respond. Tenn. Code Ann. § 40-29-103.

The Court commends Mr. Clark on his long maintained employment and his ability to live a law-abiding life since his release. Unfortunately, this Court lacks the authority to rule on Mr. Clark's petition. Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 40-29-101, *et seq.* clearly provides a path to the restoration of the rights of citizenship, but that path must go through the circuit court of the county in which Mr. Clark resides. Accordingly, Mr. Clark's petition [R. 107] is **Denied**.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE